

THE TOWER OF FIVE GLORIES

231/ Shan is public land. On the lower slopes, easily reached from the plain, some cattle are grazed, but as they are driven down to the city or villages every night, and no attempt has ever been made to build cow byres on the mountain itself, they cannot reach the middle slopes, where the pasture is

234 much better. On the other hand the Min Chia, in sharp contrast to the Chinese, milk their cattle, and make two kinds of cheese, called *niuzai* or "milk cakes," and *zerbiu*. Although the Chinese in other parts of the country regard cow's milk as unfit for human consumption, and milk drinking as a disgusting habit, the Yunnanese have taken to *niuzai* or "*Ju san*", as it is called in Chinese, which is even brought up to Yunnanfu, where it is a delicacy.

231/ The steepness of the slopes of Ts'ang Shan accounts in some manner for the Min Chia failure to raise more cattle, but the neglect of sheep raising cannot be explained on these grounds. Small flocks of sheep and goats—always more goats than sheep—are driven up daily to about the 9,000 ft. level, but they are always brought back to the villages or the city at night. They cannot therefore reach the fine pastures lying below the rain forest between 9,000 and 11,000 feet, where rich grass remains uncropped from year to year. The small flocks that do exist are not large enough to graze the area in daily reach of the plain, and they largely consist of that rather useless animal, the goat. When asked why they do not raise more sheep, the Min Chia shepherds give a reply which reveals the mental habits bred of long isolation. They say "there are no more sheep". In other words the small flocks they own, are, to them, the only existing flocks of sheep. Other places, remote beyond the encircling mountains, may have sheep also, but this has no practical importance. Sheep from such districts are not available, cannot be, or at least never are, brought to Ta Li, and have no more bearing on their problem than sheep in Australia.

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with the customary fork and with a stock that often has a beautiful ⁴¹¹ silver mounting. These old-fashioned guns are still being made in Ho-chou. Within the last four years, however, many comparatively modern guns have been sold to the Fantzu by escaped Chinese soldiers who were racked with hunger. /16/ These modern weapons often still have forks which are chiefly made in Labrang.

Their swords (2) are about one meter long. They are not worn

2. Rockhill, Plate 22.

on a sword belt, but are stuck through the belt or the hip cord in front, so that they rest almost horizontally. The haft and scabbard are usually richly decorated with silver mountings set with corals.

A knife about 30 centimeters long hangs at their side, its handle and sheath consisting of brass or silver.

The women wear large silver ear pendants, richly set with corals ³⁰¹ and turquoises. Little girls at the age of 7 or 8 get their first ear- ³⁰² rings, mostly of simple brass. Finger rings (3) of silver or copper,

3. Rockhill, Plate 5.

also set with corals and turquoises, are worn on the left hand. Neck rings or necklaces are not worn. Special emphasis is put on hair ornaments. When the young girls get their first hairdo, the side braids are, as we have said, held together by a special ornament. This consists of cloth which the women themselves sew and trim with corals. (4)

4. For a description of women's hairdo compare Rockhill, page 690.

An important tool of the women, which has at the same time ³⁰¹ developed into an ornament, is an anchor-shaped double hook of ²³⁴ brass, known in Tibetan as sao-sou (Chinese: nai-k'o, "milking ⁴¹³ hook"). (1) It is usually set with a few corals. It is always worn

1. Illustrated in Futterer 6), Vol. I, page 34.

at the belt and is used by the women to hold the pail when milking. Sometimes their belt or hip cord is also ornamented with strips of red cloth and tassels.

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a k'ang on the outside wall opposite the door. It is a ³⁵² couch raised about 60 - 70 /centimeters/ from the floor, made of bricks and hollow inside. The hollow area is equipped with drafts and serves as a stove which is fed from an opening in the outside wall.

dug through the floor. Fire can be kindled in these and they are connected with the hearth so that the fire gets sufficient draft. /21/

The furnishings are placed chiefly along the wall where the tent ⁷⁷⁸ roof slopes down and where the tent is thus lower. On the rear wall ³⁵³ of the right side, next to the place where the fuel is kept, 1/2 meter ³⁵² above the floor, is the family altar, a simple rectangular wooden box about 1/2 meter high, 40 centimeters deep and 1 1/2 meters long. On this family altar stand bronze statues of the Buddha and small bowls for holy water. The rest of the space along the tent wall is chiefly filled with bags made of coarse yak hair, in which provisions are stored, with dried yak and sheep dung, with saddle gear for horses and yaks, and with skins. Guns are often kept on a separate stand. Dried meat and yak maws in which butter is stored are hung from the ceiling of the tent. A section of the right side of the tent is sometimes closed off by boards not more than 20 centimeters high and covered with dog skins. This serves as a special resting place.

The women's section on the left contains first of all the utensils ²³⁴ needed for the dairy. These are chiefly three cylindrical wooden ⁴⁶² tubs 1 to 1 1/2 meters high and 75 centimeters in diameter, whose ³⁴² staves are held together by hoops made of withes. One of these tubs, usually the smallest, nearest the rear wall, is used to store the sour milk. In the center is the butter cask; nearest the front, a large milk tub. The tub containing the butter is closed at the top and has a hole through which runs a long, heavy stamper. Suspended from the ceiling of the tent, above the milk tub, is a bag of coarse material, through which the whey can be strained from the curds.

Next to the tent a short stake is driven into the ground, to which ²³¹ the watch dog is tied. In front of many tents there are also one or ⁷⁸⁸ two poles 3 meters high with lines from which hang prayer pennants. ³⁴³ Very occasionally there is a simple round sheepfold next to the tent, made of boards and poles.

The winter houses are also very primitive. They are usually ^{182/} placed along the rear wall of a courtyard enclosed by mud wall ³⁴² two meters high. The only opening in the enclosure is a gate in the

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342 front wall. A large part of the yard is set off by a low wall and serves
 [343] as a cattle pen. Opposite this on the narrow side is a stall for horses and
 yaks, formed merely by a roof about 2 meters wide and open toward the
 yard. The house itself consists of two rooms about two meters high
 with simple mud walls and a Tibetan-style flat roof formed of hori-
 zontal wooden beams laid side by side, with layers of earth spread
 over them. The two rooms are furnished with simple k'angs which
 are heated from the outside, as in China. Almost all these winter
 houses look very dilapidated. Next to the winter houses one some-
 [372]
 [237] times sees large stacks of dried yak dung, resembling our haystacks.

Work of the Men and Women

512 The daily schedule and the work of the tent nomads is very
 simple. They sleep surprisingly little. They get up at the first hint
 of dawn and do not go to bed until two or three hours after dark. They
 only occasionally take a nap in the middle of the day. As soon as
 they get up, they milk their animals and drive them out to pasture.

462 The men work very little. Their favorite occupation is riding
 in company and paying calls, during which the main topic of con-
 versation is pasture conditions and choice of pasture sites. When it
 [294] grows dark they chat and drink tea. Oddly enough, the men make
 their own clothes.

462 For the rest, practically all the work falls on the women. They
 ● 234 must milk, make butter and dried curds. Cooking, however, takes
 little time, in view of the simplicity of the Tibetan diet.

283 The women also spin. The fleece is first /23/ washed in cold
 462 water, wrung out and then dried on the meadow. In spinning they
 286 wind the wool on a short wooden stick and, with a simple hand
 spindle consisting of a weighted wooden stick, they spin off a coarse
 yarn. The wool which the women spin they take to the sedentary
 Fantzu women who can weave a cloth used in making tsamba bags.
 The nomad women buy back this cloth with money, butter or wool.
 The cloth for their woolen coats and pelerines they have woven by
 [435] Chinese in Ho-chou. The Chinese weaver gets one cent for a foot
 of material. The nomad women themselves know how to weave
 only the coarse yak hair cloth from which tents are made. The men
 and women also twist coarse ropes of yak hair which they use to
 stretch the tent material, for bridles and for tying up their horses.
 Other feminine handiwork, such as knitting and embroidering, is
 not done by the nomad women.

372 Gathering fuel is one of the important occupations of the women.
 237 They must collect yak and sheep dung, dry it and stack it properly.

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The women of the tent nomads do not go out to work like the ⁴⁶²wives of the sedentary Fantzu. Year in and year out their whole time is taken up by caring for the animals.

The children are put to work early tending the animals. The ⁸⁵⁷girls must, in addition, also gather dung, but the boys do not help in this occupation. The girls start to milk when they are 12 or 13 years old.

Animal Husbandry

The Mewu-Fantzu live exclusively from the products of their ²³¹livestock. They keep yaks, cattle, sheep and horses, also dogs, of course. The most important animal is the yak. The yaks of the Mewu region are generally pure black, occasionally /24/ spotted with white. There are yaks with and without horns. Lack of horns seems to be a recessive hereditary characteristic. There are wealthy families who own more than 100 yaks; but the average number is much less. The 20 tents in the community where I lived together owned 700 yaks, which means an average of 35 per family. The highest number of yaks per family in this community was 70, the lowest 7. It can also happen that poor people do not own any yaks at all, but merely rent them. A family of five needs more than 10 milch cows.

Not all families have bulls, but the owner of a bull does not get paid for covering. A cow drops her first calf when she is 2 to 3 years old. The gestation period of the yak is 9 months. Most calves are born in the third or fourth month. In the seventh or eighth month the cows are again covered. Good cows are allowed to grow very old; they are slaughtered only when they are 17 or 18 years old. The calf is gradually weaned, but the amount of milk it gets is reduced very soon after birth. When it is one or two months old the calf gets a nose plug, to prevent it from sucking. The adult yak gets a nose ring made of a bent length of a sturdy withe. Calves and young bulls are often driven to pasture in pairs with their forelegs tied together, so that they cannot stray too far away.

The oxen are used as pack animals when they are three years old. At the age of 15 or 16 they are fattened and killed. The yaks graze all the year round; only when there is deep snow, which may happen every year in January and February, do they get some green cut oats. The yaks are never given any salt, and therefore always show a definite hunger for it. Milking is done exclusively by the ²³⁴women and girls. The yak cow will let itself be milked only when her calf is tethered near by. A very good milch cow gives a bucket

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- 234 of milk three times a day; an average cow gives two bucketfuls for the day. A milk bucket holds an average of /25/ 2 1/2 liters. The [415] buckets are made and repaired by Chinese. Good buckets are made of pine wood, first-class ones of cypress. Osiers are used as hoops.

The milk is drunk boiled or eaten as clabber. But most of the milk is used to make butter. Casein is derived from the buttermilk, and is filtered through a coarse bag, whereupon it is dried, stored in the form of coarse powder, and eaten. The whey is fed to the dogs. The butter is stored in mutton or yak maws, often for a long time, "up to more than 10 years." This old butter which gets very rancid is chiefly used in the lamaseries to feed guests at the festivals or to make Buddha images. Surplus butter is sent to the temple in which the son of the family is a lama. Lamas also often come to the tents and beg for butter, which is always willingly given to them. The price for old and new butter is the same. It comes to \$0.50 per chin. (1) At home as well as in the temples old butter is made into

1. Chin, the Chinese pound, equals 605 grams.

lard in order to clarify it. This lard is used only as fuel for the sacrificial lamps.

- 236 The long yak hair from the animal's belly, back, and legs is plucked once a year in the fifth or sixth month. This is done by tying down the yak and winding the hair around a stick of wood and thus pulling it out in tufts. Yak hair is used to make cloth for the tent and for ropes. The latter are used to pull the tent widths taut, and as halters and hobbles for horses.

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435 A four-year-old milch cow costs \$15 to \$20, an old ox ready to be slaughtered, \$12 to \$13. Calves are not sold. Yaks are slaughtered mostly in September and October. Some of the fresh meat is eaten, most of it is hung up to dry. The dried meat is either hung in the tent or is packed in leather. In this packed state it is often given to a temple for /26/ safekeeping. A yak skin costs \$1 to \$4; a good yak tail costs 10 cents, a white one, 20 to 30 cents. Yak horns are used as snuff containers, rarely as drinking horns. They also serve as milk bottles for babies.

- 232 Cattle are raised only by the sedentary Fantzu, not by the tent nomads. But the tent nomads buy individual bulls for breeding, because they like very much to use crossbreeds between beef cattle and yaks. A cross between a male beef and a female yak is particularly valued (Chinese: pien-niu). The pien-niu grows larger than a yak and has somewhat shorter and more curly hair than the